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	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/006W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7883
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 007163

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

PASS USAID FOR A/AID R. MCCALL, AA/AFR V. DERRYCK AND
AFR/SA C. PALMA

PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE SEES POSSIBLE
SHIFT IN GOZ ATTITUDE ON LAND REFORM FOLLOWING PARTY
CONGRESS

REF: HARARE 6981 (NOTAL)

CLASSIFIED BY CDA EARL M. IRVING FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND
(D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
(UNDP) RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE VICTOR ANGELO BRIEFED
DIPLOMATIC HEADS OF MISSION AND SELECTED AID DIRECTORS
DECEMBER 19 ON THE CONTENTS OF ADMINISTRATOR MARK
MALLOCH-BROWN'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT MUGABE. HE TOLD THE
GATHERING THAT HE HAD DETECTED A SHIFT IN ZIMBABWEAN
GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ENGAGING THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY ON LAND REFORM FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF THE
RECENT EXTRAORDINARY ZANU-PF CONGRESS. MINISTER OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC WORKS AND NATIONAL HOUSING
IGNATIUS CHOMBO HAD ASSURED HIM THAT NEW INVASIONS OF
COMMERCIAL FARMS WOULD STOP, "DEMONSTRATORS" ON UNLISTED
AND FOREIGN OWNER FARMS WOULD BE REMOVED, AND THE WAR
VETERANS' VIOLENCE AND DEATH THREATS WOULD CEASE. THE
COMMERCIAL FARMERS' UNION (CFU) ALSO PERCEIVED A CHANGE
IN GOVERNMENT DISPOSITION AND REACTED QUICKLY, PUTTING
TOGETHER AN ARMS-LENGTH NEGOTIATING TEAM TO EXPLORE A
WAY FORWARD WITH THE GOVERNMENT, ANGELO REPORTED. OTHER
SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED SIMILAR SIGNS OF MOVEMENT FROM
THE GOVERNMENT. THE GENERAL REACTION TO ANGELO'S NEWS
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WAS ONE OF SKEPTICISM. WHILE WE WILL CONTINUE OUR
SUPPORT TO THE UNDP INITIATIVE, OUR VIEW OF A GOVERNMENT
CONVERSION TO THE RULE OF LAW IS LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN
THAT OF VICTOR ANGELO. WE SEE GOVERNMENT ADHERENCE TO
RULE OF LAW IN THE BIKITA WEST BY-ELECTION AND CABINET'S
REACTION TO THE MALLOCH-BROWN LETTER AS KEY INDICATORS
THAT HARARE IS READY TO DEAL CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH US ON
LAND REFORM. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) DURING A MEETING DECEMBER 19 TO BRIEF HEADS OF
MISSION AND SELECTED AID DIRECTORS ON UNDP ADMINISTRATOR
MARK MALLOCH-BROWN'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT MUGABE
(REFTEL), RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE VICTOR ANGELO REPORTED
A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE FROM KEY ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT
PLAYERS ON THE LAND QUESTION FOLLOWING THE JUST-
CONCLUDED ZANU-PF EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS. ANGELO CITED
A MEETING HE HAD HAD DECEMBER 18 WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
PUBLIC WORKS AND NATIONAL HOUSING MINISTER IGNATIUS
CHOMBO, HEAD OF THE GOZ'S LAND TASK FORCE, WHOSE BODY
LANGUAGE AND REACTIONS TO A VERBAL PRESENTATION OF THE
CONTENTS OF MALLOCH-BROWN'S LETTER THE FORMER FOUND
"ENCOURAGING." THE MINISTER REPORTEDLY CHARACTERIZED

THE CURRENT CONJUNCTURE IN ZIMBABWE AS THE "MOST SERIOUS AND COMPLEX SINCE INDEPENDENCE."

13. (C) ACCORDING TO THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, CHOMBO SAID THAT HE WOULD MAKE OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE TO A TEAM THAT WOULD BE WORKING ON IMPLEMENTING THE LAND REFORM IN A MORE ORGANIZED WAY. THE MINISTER INFORMED ANGELO THAT HE HAD EARLIER THAT DAY MET WITH THE WAR VETERANS' LEADERSHIP AND SENIOR COMMANDERS FROM THE

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MILITARY, THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION AND THE POLICE. IN THE GATHERING, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC WORKS AND HOUSING MINISTER REPORTEDLY CONVEYED A REQUEST FROM PRESIDENT MUGABE HIMSELF THAT THE WAR VETERANS REMOVE "DEMONSTRATORS" FROM COMMERCIAL FARMS THAT HAD NOT BEEN LISTED OR FROM FARMS THAT WERE AGRIBUSINESS CONCERNS. FURTHERMORE, HE ASKED THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR VETERANS' ASSOCIATION TO STOP MAKING DEATH THREATS, AND CEASE SANCTIONING THE USE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST COMMERCIAL FARMERS AND THEIR FARM WORKERS. THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE TOLD THE MINISTER THAT HE TOOK NOTE OF THE INFORMATION AND WOULD MONITOR PROGRESS OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GROUND. CHOMBO AND OTHERS "IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE" HAD BEEN SENDING SIGNALS THE PAST TWO WEEKS THAT LINES OF COMMUNICATION WERE NOT CLOSED, ANGELO CONTINUED, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN STUDYING MALLOCH-BROWN'S PROPOSALS. MOREOVER, THE UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO "DE-LIST" FARMS THAT FELL UNDER THE ZIMBABWE INVESTMENT CENTER AND AGRIBUSINESS (I.E., FOREIGN OWNED INTERESTS).

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SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
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14. (C) THE CFU HAD DETECTED A SHIFT IN GOVERNMENT DISPOSITION AS WELL, ANGELO REPORTED. THE ORGANIZATION HAD APPOINTED A THREE-PERSON TEAM, CONSISTING OF INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE NOT ELECTED OFFICIALS BUT ENJOYED THE TRUST OF BOTH SIDES, TO ENGAGE THE GOVERNMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS AND REPORT TO THE CFU LEADERSHIP. THE RATIONALE OF FORMING THE TEAM WAS TO GIVE IT SOME AUTONOMY OF ACTION, TO KEEP THE CFU LEADERSHIP AT ARM'S LENGTH, AND TO AVOID EXPOSING THE LEADERSHIP FURTHER. ANGELO CONCLUDED THAT THE CFU HAD TWO CHOICES: TO CONTINUE WITH ITS COURT CASES AND WIN THEM BUT LOSE THE BATTLE, OR RESOLVE SOME OF THE ISSUES OUTSIDE THE COURTS AND SKETCH OUT A WAY FORWARD. ANGELO ENDORSED THE LATTER SORT OF PRAGMATISM WITHIN A SERIOUS SITUATION. THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR CONCURRED REGARDING THE MARKED DIFFERENCE IN THE CFU LEADERSHIP'S MOOD. HE SPECULATED THAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO THE FACT THAT, IN SPITE OF

THE VITUPERATIVE TIRADES AGAINST THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS AND WHITES IN GENERAL, THE PARTY CONGRESS HAD CONCLUDED THAT ZANU-PF WILL NOT WIN WITH THE FAST TRACK LAND RESETTLEMENT EXERCISE.

15. (C) BUTTRESSING THE FOREGOING SIGNS OF A POSSIBLE EASING OF THE GOZ'S HARD-LINE STANCE, ONE OF ZIMBABWE'S LEADING AND VERY WELL-CONNECTED ECONOMIC COMMENTATORS
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TOLD ECONOFF ON DECEMBER 19 THAT HE HAD SEEN DEFINITE SIGNS OVER THE LAST WEEK THAT TOP LEADERSHIP HAD DISCUSSED THE ISSUE AT CABINET LEVEL, AND APPARENTLY AGREED TO AT LEAST ENGAGE IN SERIOUS DIALOGUE. SIMBA MAKONI AND NKOSONA MOYO (THE FINANCE AND TRADE MINISTERS), VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH MSIKA AND MIDLANDS PROVINCE GOVERNOR CEPHAS MSIPA, ALL SEPARATELY TOLD THE ECONOMIST THAT THE GOVERNMENT AT LEAST WANTED TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE AND EXPLORE A POSSIBLE FACE-SAVING WAY FORWARD. SOME ISSUES, SUCH AS A RETURN TO THE WILLING SELLER-WILLING BUYER BASIS AND COMPENSATION FOR THE LAND WERE NON-NEGOTIABLE; HOWEVER THE INVASIONS COULD BE SLOWED DOWN OR SUSPENDED IF THERE WOULD BE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT. THREE OF THE FOUR EMPHASIZED THAT EVICTIONS (OF THE RESETTLED) COULD NOT TAKE PLACE, BUT THE WAR VETERANS' ARDOR COULD BE TONED DOWN. AS AN OUTWARD MANIFESTATION OF THIS TACTICAL SHIFT, THE ECONOMIST POINTED OUT THAT IN A SPEECH DELIVERED AT A MILITARY SCHOOL OFFICER COMMISSIONING CEREMONY ON DECEMBER 16 IN GWERU ON THE HEELS OF THE PARTY CONGRESS, PRESIDENT MUGABE TOLD THE AUDIENCE IN SHONA THAT NO ADDITIONAL INVASIONS SHOULD OCCUR, AND THAT THE RESETTLED NEEDED TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR GAINS AND WORK ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY.

16. (C) THE GENERAL DONOR REACTION TO ANGELO'S NEWS WAS MIXED, TENDING TOWARD THE SKEPTICAL AND WE'LL-BELIEVE-IT-WHEN-WE-SEE-IT. THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED MINISTER CHOMBO'S OSTENSIBLE ASSURANCES AS "WISHFUL THINKING." THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S REPRESENTATIVE REMINDED THOSE ASSEMBLED THAT THE PARTY CONGRESS FULLY
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BACKED THE FAST-TRACK RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM. THE DANISH AMBASSADOR SAID, "IT MAY BE TOO LATE FOR US. THE TAXPAYERS AND THE POLITICIANS HAVE HEARD THE RHETORIC," AND WILL NOT HELP THE CURRENT ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT. ANGELO'S FINAL COMMENT BACKPEDALED FROM HIS EARLIER ATTEMPT TO SPIN SOME OPTIMISM, "I DIDN'T SAY THAT THERE WAS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL; I SAID THAT WE WERE IN A TUNNEL..."

17. COMMENT: WE ARE PREPARED TO FOLLOW THE MALLOCH-BROWN INITIATIVE AS FAR AS IT GOES. THAT SAID, WE DETECT A SHIFT IN GOAL POSTS MORE THAN ATTITUDES OR BEHAVIOR HERE. OUR CONCERN ABOUT RULE OF LAW IS NO LONGER FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON LAND. WE MUST LOOK AT VIOLENCE IN THE MARONDERA WEST BY-ELECTION AND THAT LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THE JANUARY 13-14 BIKITA BY-ELECTION, THE GOVERNMENT'S PROBABLY UNCONSTITUTIONAL INVALIDATION OF THE ELECTORAL CHALLENGES BY PRESIDENTIAL DECREE, THE THREATS ON THE JUDICIARY FROM ALL SIDES, AND THE PRESIDENT'S RACE-BAITING AND IGNORING ORDERS FROM THE HIGH AND SUPREME COURTS. THE BREAKDOWN IN RESPECT FOR LAW AND ORDER IS GETTING VERY SERIOUS AND MAY WELL

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BACKFIRE ON THE GOVERNMENT (ANGELO HIMSELF SAID THAT
SOME OF HIS GOVERNMENT INTERLOCUTORS HAD ACKNOWLEDGED
THIS "PANDORA'S BOX"). WE WILL LOOK FOR SOLID SIGNS OF
A RETURN TO THE RULE OF LAW, NOT ONLY IN BIKITA, BUT
ALSO ON THE FARMS AND AT STATE HOUSE. CABINET'S
REACTION TO THE MALLOCH-BROWN INITIATIVE WILL BE
IMPORTANT, TOO. AT THE MOMENT, AND IN SPITE OF VICTOR
ANGELO'S UNSINKABLE OPTIMISM, THE PROVERBIAL GLASS STILL
APPEARS TO BE HALF-EMPTY TO US. END COMMENT.

IRVING

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